Ud 6.4 — Tittha Sutta: Sectarians (1)

English translation by John D. Ireland.

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Changes: Presentation only: original HTML markup reflowed into plain text; wording, numbering and source repetitions retained. No repetitions expanded.

Completeness: ABBREVIATED. Every source-unit character is preserved; source ellipsis or repetition-omission statement retained. Canonical repetitions were not reconstructed.

Text

Thus have I heard. At one time the Lord was staying near Savatthi in the Jeta Wood at Anathapindika's monastery. At that time there were a number of recluses and brahmans, wanderers of various sects, living around Savatthi. And they were of various views, of various beliefs, of various opinions, and they relied for their support on their various views. There were some recluses and brahmans who asserted and held this view: "The world is eternal; only this is true, any other (view) is false." There were some recluses and brahmans who asserted: "The world is not eternal; only this is true, any other (view) is false." There were some who asserted: "The world is finite... The world is infinite... The life-principle and the body are the same... The life-principle and the body are different... The Tathagata exists beyond death... The Tathagata does not exist beyond death... The Tathagata both exists and does not exist beyond death; The Tathagata neither exists nor does not exist beyond death; only this is true, any other (view) is false." And they lived quarrelsome, disputatious, and wrangling, wounding each other with verbal darts, saying: "Dhamma is like this, Dhamma is not like that! Dhamma is not like this, Dhamma is like that!"

Then a number of bhikkhus, having put on their robes in the forenoon and taken their bowls and outer cloaks, entered Savatthi for almsfood. Having walked in Savatthi for almsfood and returned after the meal, they approached the Lord, prostrated themselves, sat down to one side, and said to the Lord: "At present, revered sir, there are a number of recluses and brahmans, wanderers of various sects, living around Savatthi. And they are of various views... saying: 'Dhamma is like this!... Dhamma is like that!'"

"The wanderers of other sects, bhikkhus, are blind, unseeing. They do not know what is beneficial, they do not know what is harmful. They do not know what is Dhamma, they do not know what is not Dhamma. Not knowing what is beneficial and what is harmful, not knowing what is Dhamma and what is not Dhamma, they are quarrelsome... saying: 'Dhamma is like this!... Dhamma is like that!'

"Formerly, bhikkhus, there was a certain king in this very Savatthi. And that king addressed a man: 'Come now, my good man, bring together all those persons in Savatthi who have been blind from birth.'

"'Yes, your majesty,' that man replied, and after detaining all the blind people in Savatthi, he approached the king and said, 'All the blind people in Savatthi have been brought together, your majesty.'

"'Now, my man, show the blind people an elephant.'

"'Very well, your majesty,' the man replied to the king, and he presented an elephant to the blind people, saying, 'This, blind people, is an elephant.'

"To some of the blind people he presented the head of the elephant, saying, 'This is an elephant.' To some he presented an ear of the elephant, saying, 'This is an elephant.' To some he presented a tusk... the trunk... the body... the foot... the hindquarters... the tail... the tuft at the end of the tail, saying, 'This is an elephant.'

"Then, bhikkhus, the man, having shown the elephant to the blind people, went to the king and said, 'The blind people have been shown the elephant, your majesty. Do now what you think is suitable.' Then the king approached those blind people and said, 'Have you been shown the elephant?'

"'Yes, your majesty, we have been shown the elephant.'

"'Tell me, blind people, what is an elephant like?'

"Those blind people who had been shown the head of the elephant replied, 'An elephant, your majesty, is just like a water jar.' Those blind people who had been shown the ear of the elephant replied. "An elephant, your majesty, is just like a winnowing basket.' Those blind people who had been shown the tusk of the elephant replied, 'An elephant, your majesty, is just like a plowshare.' Those blind people who had been shown the trunk replied, 'An elephant, your majesty, is just like a plow pole.' Those blind people who had

been shown the body replied, 'An elephant, your majesty, is just like a storeroom.' Those blind people who had been shown the foot replied, 'An elephant, your majesty, is just like a post.' Those blind people who had been shown the hindquarters replied, 'An elephant, your majesty, is just like a mortar.' Those blind people who had been shown the tail replied, 'An elephant, your majesty, is just like a pestle.' Those blind people who had been shown the tuft at the end of the tail replied, 'An elephant, your majesty, is just like a broom.'

"Saying 'An elephant is like this, an elephant is not like that! An elephant is not like this, an elephant is like that!' they fought each other with their fists. And the king was delighted (with the spectacle).

"Even so, bhikkhus, are those wanderers of various sects blind, unseeing...
saying, "Dhamma is like this!... Dhamma is like that!'"

Then, on realizing its significance, the Lord uttered on that occasion this inspired utterance:

Some recluses and brahmans, so called, Are deeply attached to their own views; People who only see one side of things Engage in quarrels and disputes.